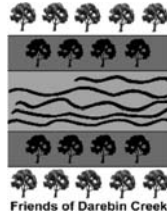


Community Coalition for the Darebin to Yarra Link Trail



Press Release - 27 February 2008

The proposed Darebin Creek - Yarra Link Trail represents a vital link between our communities that will enable access to the Darebin and Yarra parklands for old and young alike, make an effective route to LaTrobe University and enable Ivanhoe and Alphington children to safely ride to Kew High School. The proposed link is an off-road shared path along Darebin Creek, passing beneath Heidelberg Road and over a new bridge crossing the Yarra River.

In 2005, a number of diverse community groups formed a Community Coalition with a common goal of 'actively lobbying for completion of the missing links in the Darebin – Yarra trail'. The coalition has since expanded and now represents a range of interests in the shared trail, including local bushwalkers, environmental groups, recreational and commuter cyclists, and schools.

The Community Coalition represents a microcosm of the broad appeal for the shared trail and the significant number of people keenly waiting for its completion. By way of example, the Boroondara Bushwalkers supports walking as a way to fitness and an appreciation of our natural environment. The Bushwalkers have over 200 members. Although many walks are conducted in the bush, regular walks for older members commence in Kew and use shared paths. Completion of the link through Willsmere Chandler Park across the Yarra River will open up a series of beautiful walks through urban parklands.

The link will also open up a safe cycling route for Ivanhoe and Alphington children to safely ride to Kew High School. Some children already ride to school via the Chandler Highway which is dangerous and indirect. Many more children would ride if it was safe. The shared trail through to the Willsmere Rd underpass gives them safe passage from Alphington and Ivanhoe to Kew High School. Riding to school promotes healthy living, self reliance and helps kids to feel they can do something positive to address Climate Change.

The coalition also includes environmentalists who recognise that the trail will form a unique link for people to stroll between three significant parks, Darebin Parklands,

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Napier Waller Reserve and Willsmere Chandler Park. Connecting the trails will increase awareness and appreciation of the Darebin Creek and Kew Billabong environments. Conservation Biology research has shown that areas of conservation significance fare better where people are allowed in for appropriate uses in comparison to the situation where people are excluded.

The Darebin - Yarra link trail is far more than just another track and slabs of concrete. The trail is a vital link between communities and represents the hopes and aspirations of a lot of people who have worked hard and long for its earliest completion.

The Coalition represents:

- Alphington Primary School Council
- Boroondara Bicycle User Group
- Boroondara Bushwalkers
- Darebin Creek Management Committee
- Darebin Bicycle User Group
- Darebin Parklands Association
- Friends of Darebin Creek
- Kew High School
- South Alphington & Fairfield Civic Association
- Yarra Bicycle User Group

For further information, contact:

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Photographs can be arranged